THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) During 1996-97, two handicrafts fairs were organised by the Government in the State of Orissa and fifty nine other fairs were organised in other States.

(b) Artisans are selected for participation in fairs on the basis of their merit and crafts practised by them. National Award winners, Merit Certificate holders, State Award winners and craftspersons producing crafts which are languishing are generally given preference for participation in the fairs.

Provident Fund to Textile Workers

6551. SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the management of New Egerton Woollen Mills branch Dhariwal has not paid the employee's share of provident fund since July 1993 to its workers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the amount of provident fund due to the employees till 31st January, 1997 and by what time the payment it likely to be made ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) As on 31.1.1997 an amount of Rs. 11.16 lakhs was due to the employees which has since been paid.

France Assistance for Markets of Agricultural Products in E.N.

6552. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether France has offered its help to India to enter European markets for marketing agricultural products;

(b) if so, whether any agreement has been signed or proposed to be signed in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken to implement those agreements ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Royalty on Coal

6553. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :
SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT :
SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry prepared any questionaire on the revision of royalty rates on coal and circulated to all the State Government for their comments;

(b) if so, whether the comments of the State received have been examined by the Government;

(c) if so, the action taken for the revision of royalty on coal;

(d) whether Lignite which is equivalent to 'E' grade coal was not included in the questionaire for revision of royalty;

(e) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(f) the number of times the royalty rates revised during the last three years and the amount of royalty given to each state during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) The questionnaire was prepared and circulated to the State Governments in February, 1997 by the Study Group constituted by the Ministry of Coal on 28.1.1997 to consider the question of revision of the rates of royalty on coal.

(b) and (c) On consideration of the comments of the State Governments and other aspects, the Study Group is required to submit its report along with the recommendations by 28th July, 1997 to the Government for taking a decision on revision in rates of royalty on coal.

(d) and (e) A separate Study Group to go into the question of revision of royalty rate on lignite was constituted on 15.3.95. Therefore, lignite was not included in the questionnaire circulated to the State Governments by the Study Group on the revision of royalty rates on coal set up on 28.1.1997.

(f) Royalty rates on coal were revised last on 11.10.94. However, in respect of Meghalaya only the royalty rates on coal were further revised on 13.1.95. The details of royalty paid by the Coal India Limited to the coal producing States during the last three years are given below :-